

in the *Pless de la Concorde*, look as fresh as if but recently done. And what a glorious place this is! When the sun shines upon its fountains and orange trees, its Luxor obelisk, Chamber of Deputies, the *Madeleine*, *Champs Elysees*, and the *Tuileries*, we know no piece of a city more beautiful in the whole world.

We must now leave the gay capital, however, till next week.

#### REFORM OF FREEMASONRY.

I was much pleased with Mr. Godwin's article on this subject; but he appears to labour under some misconception regarding the state of the craft in the present day. It is not now a merely convivial and charitable association, but, in the opinion and practice of many of its most accomplished members, a truly religious order, capable of high and holy purposes: whilst it inculcates the first principles of morality and virtue, it interferes with no man's religious belief; but teaches him his duty to God, to his neighbour, and to his own soul, and fits him for the proper discharge of that duty. Faith, hope, and charity, temperance, sobriety, chastity, and obedience to the commandments of the Almighty, are urged in all its formulae. I am one of those who wish to see speculative, symbolical, or, as it is called, *free masonry*, more operative, and I have laboured to make it so in the lodge over which I have for many years presided as W. M. and P.M. We have conducted our proceedings, when the lodge has been tiled, as if we were in a church or chapel. No sooner has the Bible been opened than the voice of praise has been added to that of prayer and thanksgiving in the best tones which a well-practised choir of brethren, aided by the organ, could command; and this has been repeated during initiations, and before the lodge has been closed for refreshment. I hope at no distant period also, that besides the customary authorised lectures on the craft, we shall have lectures on astronomy, architecture, music, and the other arts and sciences, in which the public may be permitted to participate as auditors.—A PAST GRAND OFFICER.

THE publication, in your valuable journal, on the 26th of July, of the paper, read before the Institute of Architects several years since, on the subject of Freemasonry, offers a favourable opportunity for calling attention to the fact that, however much architecture and building were indebted to Freemasonry, any practical connection between the thing signified and the existing institution has entirely ceased. Freemasonry, as it now exists, with its "peculiar system of morality," aims at being a charitable institution of peculiar excellence, under the agreeable garb of good fellowship and social assemblies. It cannot, however, be denied, that it has, very improperly, ceased to exercise the least influence on the sciences and arts in which it originated: it has also not attained its secondary and now professed object; for no other charitable institution ever did, or does, apply in charity so small a per centage of the sums collected in various ways from its several members. My object is to endeavour to restore some intellectuality to "the craft," and incite "the brethren" to recover their lost influence in those useful and graceful arts which conduce so much to the comfort and exaltation of mankind. A little reflection, in or out of the "Lodge," must convince the "Past Master" down to the "entered apprentice," that if the body of Freemasons did ever do any good to the world by promoting the arts allied to architecture, they have ceased to do so now, and that all the good they do, does not compensate for the change in the objects they pursue. Being "free or speculative" masons, the emblems they use should in reality be applied to their "morals," in the sense of elevating the minds of the fraternity above the mere vanity and levity which are now its chief characteristics.

It may be as well, to a right understanding of Freemasonry as it exists, to state its consti-

tution, which may be done without any breach of the solemn obligation to secrecy. A Freemason's "lodge" consists of a master annually elected by the members of the lodge, and capable of being once re-elected, certain officers, whom the master appoints, and the subscribing members. The past masters, masters, and wardens of lodges compose the "Grand Lodge." Every lodge contributes annually to the funds of the Grand Lodge a certain amount for each of its members. The members of a "lodge" pay an admission fee, varying in amount according to circumstances, but usually something considerable, so that (mechanics' lodges excepted) the contributions to the funds of a lodge are sufficient, indeed, for great and useful objects, as well as for good fellowship. The funds, however, are now expended in a small contribution to Grand Lodge, an insignificant outlay in charity, the trifling lodge expenses, and the whole of the rest in eating and drinking. Nine out of ten of all the lodges have, at some time, exceeded their income in the expenditure for "banquets." The income of Grand Lodge, arising from some permanent property and the contributions of the lodges as above stated, is disposed of by less than one moiety being expended in charity, and the balance being otherwise disbursed.

The Grand Lodge, or parliament, composed as above, meets once a quarter at Freemasons' hall, for about three hours each sitting; but the affairs of the craft are practically in the hands of the "Board of General Purposes," the members of which are annually appointed, part by the nomination of the "Grand Master," and part elected by the Grand Lodge. There are also some charities mainly supported by the "Craft," or general body of Freemasons, viz., for aged and decayed Freemasons, and a boys' and girls' school.

The admission of a member into a lodge is by ballot, and the monthly meeting is spent partly in "lodge," when the new members are initiated, and the other "work" of the lodge is transacted: the rest of the evening is passed in dining and drinking toasts. Both in the lodge and at the banquet religious and political matters are rigidly excluded. This, of course, limits the field of conversation; but when, in addition, there are frequent and oft-repeated formal toasts and speeches, together with professional singing, it will be seen, that whatever good-fellowship may produce, there is very little room for intellectuality. No doubt some of these meetings are very agreeable, while others are insufferably stupid; so that it may truly be said, that the same number of gentlemen, meeting under any other circumstances, could not but be greatly more profited by the conversation. So utterly abandoned has the craft become to small charities and personal indulgences, that although it is a fundamental rule that none shall be advanced without a competent knowledge of the "arts and sciences," yet, when a member is examined prior to advancement, the very limited knowledge required is absent,—the answers being palpably dictated by a bystander.

Now, my object in this communication is, to urge the importance of restoring to Freemasonry that soul which it has undoubtedly lost, and to preserve much that is really valuable in the institution, by again in some way allying it to the art with which its name is associated.

CORNER STONE.

#### FOREIGN ARCHITECTURAL AND ARTISTICAL INTELLIGENCE.

*Archæological Society, Rome.*—At the last meeting of this society, M. Visconti, *Commisario dell' Antichita*, read a paper on the ancient altar and tabernacle of the Basilica Liberiana of Rome. Having alluded to its origin in 1369, owing to the finding of three holy heads (?), he named Giovanni di Stefano da Siena, as the hitherto unknown architect of this fine art-work, ascertained from a *Brevi of Urban V.* It is the artist who made the sculptures in the dome of Orvieto. A goldsmith of the name of Giovanni di Bartolo from Siena, was also mentioned, of whom are the two statues in the middle of the monument, serving as guardians to the

relics. The heads of these statues were of pure gold, the remainder of silver and gold enamelled. These materials, as well as many precious stones appertaining thereto, were contributed by Charles V. of France, and the two Joannas of France and Naples. The paintings which adorn the basement of the tabernacle, have given rise to great disputes, in which authors, like Mellini, Baglioni, del Titi, Angelo Rocco, and others, have taken a part, some ascribing them to Berna da Siena, or even Leonardo da Vinci; on all of which M. Visconti entertains some doubt. Interesting, moreover, is the warning, put forth also by the learned commissary of antiquities on this occasion, not to restore ancient monuments without the greatest attention to their original character.

*Increase of Collections, Louvre, Paris.*—This museum has been lately enriched by articles, brought by M. Sauley from the East. Amongst them are fragments of tombs of two kings of Judea. Mexican and Egyptian relics also have been added, and amongst the pictures, one of Velasquez, representing his own portrait with those of other personages of his time.

*Begas, the Painter.*—It is curious to observe, that although M. Begas was a very young man in Goethe's lifetime, yet that great man fully anticipated the beautiful subsequent career of the Berlin painter. The portraits of the Charlottenburg gallery of illustrious men, painted by him, would be alone sufficient for his subsequent fame. Besides that of Meyerbeer, lately finished, A. Humboldt, Schelling, Carl Ritter, Leopold Buch, Rauch, Cornelius, and Schadow have been already exhibited—a galaxy of characters every country would be proud of. The enterprise, however, is a constantly progressing one, and the portrait of the great naturalist *Link* is now in preparation.

*Naples: Architecture and Archæology.*—The descriptive work on the city of Naples, published by order of Government, "*Napoli e i luoghi celebri delle sue vicinanze*," has been followed by one of a more professional character, entitled "*Monumenti del Regno delle Due Sicilie*." It is the celebrated Sc. Volpicella who has described the cathedral, the church of S. Domenico, the Porta Capuana, &c. The text is enriched by transcripts of inscriptions, and passages of ancient chronicles. Of an equally commendable character are the "*Tombe illustri Napolitane*," by Giuseppe del Re, as well as the "*Tesoro lapidario Napolitano*," by Aloe, works hardly known beyond the limits of Italy. Interesting are the "*Lettere sulla chiesa dell' Incoronata e sulla sepultura di Giovanna I.*" by G. Angeluzzi. The author of the latter work does not think, that the frescoes of the seven sacraments ascribed to Giotto are by this master: the reasons, however, for the authenticity of the monument in the church of Sta. Chiara are well supported. Of great archæological interest is the book of R. Garucci, "*Storia d' Iscrizioni ricavate da Monumenti di Architettura e di Numismatica*." This work treats of the history of this city of ancient Samnium, which, with the exception of Corinium, was the largest of the Italian confederation. Its history before the Samnian war is not to be found in the classic writers; and has now been restituted by M. Garucci from its ancient architectural and numismatic remains. The two Benedictine friars Corne and Mowckah have published a work on the Convent Trinità de la Cava, and the Canon Pascano a description of the church of Salerno.

*The Steam-engine in Italy, in 1756.*—During some late works at the Catalogue of the Library of Venice, a memoir, dated as above, was found, in which a certain canon Gautier, Professor of Mathematics, dilates on the inconvenience of steam navigation, and submits a plan for a *fire-engine*, by which ships could be navigated. No attention was paid to him in France, but the Venetian ambassador invited him to the Lagoon city, as the government intended to give to its navy a new impulse. There he obtained the support promised to him, and was just on the point of commencing his experiments, when he died.